

NIAGRA FALLS, N.Y.  
GAZETTE

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# SPEAKING OUT

By  
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All those years since the beginning of '63 the anti-war movement tried to convince the American public of the folly undertaken in Vietnam in its collective name. All those years, through the underground press, through demonstrations and teach-ins, through every means at hand the movement sought to apprise the people of the manner in which they were being deceived as to the extent of the American involvement in Indochina, as to the methods employed there, as to the motivation for being there in the first place.

The sum and substance of the information leaked from the Pentagon papers supports virtually every position the peace movement has adopted since its inception. Small wonder that they are behind its distribution. Small wonder this administration, as the previous one might well have, tried to suppress further dissemination of that information.

Looking at the so-far published segments of the Pentagon papers we see a lot of movement rhetoric—standing strong in the light of considerable evidence. Early

statements of efforts such as "Stop the Draft Week," and the Viet Nam Day Committee expose clandestine U.S. sorties across Asian borders. The Pentagon papers confirm the prosecution of covert military activities in Laos and North Vietnam. Position papers presented at early teach-ins argued that 80 per cent of the South Vietnamese population did not desire our presence in their country. It now develops that even President Ngo Dinh Diem, a pro-western politician elected with considerable American assistance, initially discouraged our intervention.

The teach-in arguments, as well as those forwarded by virtually every anti-war group to date, held that the Vietnam conflict is a civil war, not a war of North Vietnamese aggression. In the stolen report a Central Intelligence Agency evaluation of 1963 states that Viet Cong strength is centered not in Hanoi but in the south. In a later communique that CIA analysts curtly dismiss the domino theory, a pet fallacy of the Johnson drew that sought to justify our actions in Vietnam on the grounds that a military defeat there would

bring all of Southeast Asia under communism.

After the election of 1964 and the onset of massive U.S. air raids against North Vietnam and the deployment of U.S. ground troops in large numbers in South Vietnam, the still-small peace movement alleged that President Johnson had betrayed his campaign promises and engaged us in a land war in Asia by a plan formed prior to the election. The papers reveal the drafting of such a plan during the summer of 1964. Some time ago in congressional anti-war circles the suggestion was made that the Gulf of Tonkin incident, an ostensible attack upon American destroyers carried out by North Vietnamese gunboats in international waters, was distorted for purposes of persuasion. The papers betray that the attacks, far from being unprovoked, were part of a defense arrayed against a raid on coastal islands of the democratic republic of North Vietnam, carried out by our allies under CIA supervision.

Perhaps the most damning truths to emerge from the report, the solidest support it throws behind anti-war forces, lies in the overall confirmation of the accusation that our military commitment to South Vietnam is no accident, never was, was a calculated political move about which we were all deceived from the outset. States former Assistant Defense Secretary John

McNaughton in the papers discussing our motives in the Indochina war, we entered "71 per cent to avoid a humiliating defeat; 20 per cent to keep South Vietnam from Chinese hands; 10 per cent to allow the people of South Vietnam to enjoy a better, freer life." Certainly, that revelation lend credence to the words of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg that "the men to whom the (American people) gave so much respect and trust as well as power regarded them as contemptuously as they regarded our allies."

It has already been stated elsewhere that the paper reveal little that was entirely heretofore unknown. What the papers amount to, and this is important, is a signed confession to most of the worst accusations of the war critics.

Over the past 10 years and war scholars like Noam Chomsky, John Galbraith, Townsend Hoopes, and anti-war journalists like Harrison Salisbury, had seen the pernicious nature of our expanding role in Indochina and exposed its dangers to the public. I can recall reports of U.S. atrocities dating to 1967, the Stockholm trials conducted by Bertrand Russell and Jean Paul Sartre. The accuracy of much of what has been said has only grudgingly been accepted by a nation anxious to believe its leaders.